SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: He stated that the Government's intention is only to get them passed and that is why it wants to take them to the next session. Should I conclude from his statement that the Government is not sure that it can pass these two Bills and that is why it is taking them to the next session, and in the meantime it would indulge in horse-trading?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Punjab): *

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: *

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY (Tamil Nadu): *

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No. I am not allowing anything other than the listed business. Did you hear me or did you not hear me? Please sit down. I am not allowing anything other than the listed business. It seems you are not interested in it. (*Interruptions*) Please lisent. Take your seat. Don't argue with the Chair. Otherwise, you will have to march out of the House.

SHRI DEBA PRASAD RAY: I am walking out.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Walk out.

SHRI DEBA PRASAD RAY: What is this? I walk out.

(*At this stage the hon. Member left the Chamber*)

SHRI BINDESHWARI DUBEY: Madam, I move... (*Interruptions*)

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA (Andhra Pradesh): *

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There is nothing out of the business which has already been listed. I am going according to the rules. I know what you want to say.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: He wants to know how much time you have allotted for this. You have not announced the time.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Two hours. The Minister is announcing the Government business.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: *

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him announce the Government business.

श्रम मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री और संसदीय कार्य मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री राधाकिशन मालवीय) : वर्किंग जर्नलिस्ट बिल पर दो घंटे और एस०सी०एस०टी० बिल पर चार घंटे रखे गये हैं।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Reddy, here should be some peace. Then only I can allow. In the noise how can I allow?

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA (Uttar Pradesh):

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Malaviya will not go on record.

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: *

WORKING JOURNALISTS AND OTHER NEWSPAPER EMPLOYEES CONDITIONS OF SERVICE) AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1989.

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI BINDESHWARI DUBEY): Madam Deputy Chairman, I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Working Journalists and other

*Not recorded.

[Shri Bindeshwari Dubey]

Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

Madam, as hoourable Members are aware, the Government have from time to time, appointed Wage Boards for looking into the wage structure of working journalists and other newspaper employees including those who work in the news agencies. These Wage Boards are appointed and function in accordance with the provisions contained in the Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provision Act, 1955. Keeping in mind the changes in economic conditions in the country and in the newspaper industry, the wage boards make recommendations in respect of changes which ought to be brought about in the wages and working conditions of these employees. Honourable Members are aware how deeply this Government is concerned with the welfare of workers. It is in the pursuit of this concern that an effort is made that Wage Boards are appointed, with reasonable frequency, to ensure the continued availability of fair service conditions to workers in the newspaper industry. The last Wage Boards appointed to look into the wage structure and service conditions of journalists and non-journalists were constituted in July and August, 1985.

Apart from trying to reduce any delays which may be occasioned after the receipt of the report of the Wage Boards, it is equally important to see wheher it is possible to reduce the delays which could occur in the working of the Wage Boards. This required a review of the law and procedures from the point of view of examining whether any changes or clarifications in these laws would be helpful.

Along with an examination of the substantive recommendations, which these Wage Boards have made with regard to the wages and service conditions of the employees, the Government also undertook a study of various provisions of the Act with the above objective. During the course of this study, it has come to our notice that although no substantive changes may be required in the law, there are certain terms and concepts incorporated in the Act which have lent themselves to differing interpretations by different Wage Boards. A perusal of the reports of the past Wage Boards seems to indicate that such difficulties have become a feature of the functioning of these Wage Boards. It is in the light of this experience that it is considered appropriate to incorporate certain amendments in the Act in order to clarify doubts, misconception and controversies about these terms as this would make for smoother functioning of the Wage Boards, possibly to reduce the time taken by them and reduce the area of disagreement among the members of the Boards.

The main points on which amendments are sought to be made in the Act are:—

(1) The Act at present adopts, by reference, the definition of the term "wages" from the detailed definition given in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. For the sake of clarity, it is now proposed that the definition of wages be incorporated in the Act itself.

(2) Past experience indicates that there has been some measure of controversy as to whether the term "wages" used in this Act includes allowances as also such new allowance that the Wage Boards may feel inclined to recommend. Even though the position in law is quite clear that this is in fact so, in view of the past controversy it is proposed to incorporate an appro-

priate amendment to explicitly include allowances and new allowances along with the wages so as to enable Wage Boards to fix and revise the rates of wages and various existing allowances and also to recommend new allowances.

(3) In the past there has also been controversy as to whether Wage Boards can fix wages on an all India basis or whether it is incumbent upon them to take up such fixation on a regional basis. In spite of the fact that the position in law is quite clear, that the Wage Boards have the authority to either recommend wages on an all-India basis or on a regional basis, this controversy seems to have persisted. Therefore, with a view to clarifying matters and setting at rest this controversy, it is proposed to incorporate an explanation under section 10(4) that Wage Boards are not prevented from fixing the wages on an all-India basis.

(4) The definition of newspaper establishments under section 2(d) has also been a subject-matter of some debate in the past. It is now proposed to amend section 2(d) of the Act to provide for clubbing of newspaper establishments under common control and also to elaborate the meaning of common control so as to make it crystal clear so that the Wage Boards do not experience any difficulty in this regard.

Honourable Members will notice that the amendments proposed in the Bill before the House are clarificatory in nature and the objective of the Government in bringing these amendments is to facilitate the working of the Wage Boards and to prevent unnecessary controversies and varying interpretations which impede their work. We are proposing these amendments keeping in view the larger interests of the working of the newspaper industry and for ensuring that the efforts of Government towards discharging its statutory responsibility of fixing and revising the wages of the working journalists and non-journalist employees, are not impeded as a result of unnecessary and fruitless quibbling over definitions which, in the absence of these clarifications, had been lending themselves to varying interpretations.

Since these amendments are only clarificatory in nature, and these have always been implied in the existing legislation, it has been proposed in the Bill that these clarifications have always been intended and deemed to be contained in the Act.

With these words, I commend the Bill for consideration and passing by this august House.

The question was proposed.

उपसभापति : श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय। मालवीय जी हमारा बहुत समय बीत गया है इसलिए . . .

श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय (उत्तर प्रदेश): इसलिए हम लोगों ने कहा था कि पंचायत राज बिल पर चलें और . . (**व्यवधान**) इसी लिए हम लोगों ने सुझाव दिया था कि इसको पास कर दिया जाये, पंचायत राज बिल पर बहस हो जाये और इस पर वोटिंग भी हो जाये।

उपसभापति : आप 12 मिनट बोल लें।

श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय : माननीय उपसभापति महोदया, मैं इस संशोधन विधेयक का समर्थन करने के लिए खड़ा हुआ हूं जैसा कि इसके उद्देश्य और कारणों में बतलाया गया है इसमें बहुत सी जो परिभाषायें थीं इनको समझने में कठिनाई होती थी इसलिए विधेयक लाना पड़ा है। मेरी समझ में यह विधेयक बहुत पहले लाना चाहिए था लेकिन फिर भी देर आये और दुरुस्त आये। लेकिन चूंकि यह विधेयक जो वर्किंग जर्नलिस्ट्स हैं इनसे संबंधित है इसलिए मैं इस ओर सरकार का ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहता

[श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय]

हूं कि आये दिन पत्रकारों को या उनके दफ्तरों में जिस प्रकार से टेलीफोन जाते हैं और उनको धमकियां दी जाती हैं इससे पत्रकार निर्भय होकर, स्वतंत्र रूप से अपने कर्तव्य का पालन नहीं कर पा रहे हैं। मैं एक घटना की ओर आपका ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहता हूं जो 17 तारीख के समाचार पत्रों में छपी है कि केन्द्रीय परिषद् के एक मंत्री महोदय ने एक समाचार पत्र के संवाददाता को टेलीफोन किया कि आप अखबार निकाल रहे हैं या मेरे बारे में कोई इश्तिहार छाप रहे हैं और यह खबर 17 अगस्त के नेशनलस में छपी है। मैं आपके माध्यम से सरकार से निवेदन करना चाहता हूं कि इस प्रकार से पत्रकारों को जो धमकी दी जाती है, जो राष्ट्रीय दैनिक पत्र हैं अंग्रेजी के या हिंदी के उनके समाचार सम्पादकों को इस प्रकार से जो धमकी दी जाती है इसको बंद करना चाहिए और चूंकि मैं चाहता हूं कि जरा सदन का काम शांतिपूर्वक चले इसलिए इस संबंध में मैं अपनी कोई ज्यादा बात नहीं कहना चाहता हूं।

बहुत दिन से बातचीत आयोग बैठा हुआ था। कई बार उन्होंने अपने समय को बढ़ाया। बार-बार इस सदन में मांग भी की गयी और बछावत आयोग ने अपनी संस्तुतियां भी सरकार के पास भेज दी लेकिन उसके पश्चात् उन संस्तुतियों के संबंध में अभी तक कोई विज्ञप्ति या गजट में नोटीफिकेशन क्यों नहीं हुआ है इस बात को मैं जानना चाहता हूं क्योंकि कम से कम आधे दर्जन से ज्यादा बार जस्टिस बछावत ने अपने कार्यकाल को बढ़ाया। बहुत दिन से पत्रकार इस संबंध में अपनी मांग को रख रहे थे और जब उनकी संस्तुतियां आ गयी तो उन संस्तुतियों को मानने में या कार्यान्वित करने में सरकार की ओर से घोषणा क्यों नहीं हो रही है। इसलिए मैं श्रम मंत्री से निवेदन करना चाहता हूं कि जब आज वे अपना उत्तर दें तो आज ही इस बात की घोषणा इस सदन में करें कि बचावत आयोग की संस्तुतियां जो पत्रकारों के पक्ष में हैं उनके संबंध में घोषणा आज ही सरकार जारी कर देगी। इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ मैं इस संशोधन विधेयक का समर्थन करता हूं:

उपसभापति श्री कपिल वर्मा : वर्मा जी, आप भी जरा संक्षेप में बोलिएगा।

श्री कपिल वर्मा (उत्तर प्रदेश) : बहुत संक्षेप में।

Madam Deputy Chairman, I am grateful to you for allowing me to speak on the subject particularly because this concerns a very, very important section of the society, the Fourth Estate and I am sure that every hon. Member of the House will support this measure and it would be passed unanimously. Madam, it is in the fitness of things that this Bill we are passing in the Nehru centenary year because Pandit Nehru was a great votary of freedom of the press and he gave us this parent Act of 1955. This gave security to the journalists for the first time. He gave them a decent wage. He was the first to set up a Wage Board and I would say that newspaper industry is the only industry in this country which has a mandatory statutory Wage Board.

Madam, I am also grateful to the Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi who took active initiative and got processed the recommendations of the Wage Board. The Prime Minister's office worked overtime and consulted all other Ministries concerned and also the newspaper organisations and as a result of this, this Bill has come before us. There are obvious weaknesses in the Wage Board report which they processed but the second part of it, I would like the Government to modify. Quickly. The first of course will be getting through immediately.

The Vice-Chairman (Shri B. Satyanarayan Reddy) in the Chair.

For example, the house rent allowance ceiling is Rs. 330, the range being between Rs. 100 and Rs. 330. I wonder how a person getting Rs. 100 or Rs. 330 would hire a house in Delhi or some other similar place. Similarly, about the city compensatory allowance, you will be shocked to know that the minimum is only Rs. 20 and it can go up to only Rs. 109. The dearness allowance is also ridiculous. I hope the government will modify these recommendations quickly and they will place a time-limit on hearing both sides under 12(2) because I understand that the recommendations are being notified after the passage of the Bill in two parts, first dealing with the wage proposals and the second about the allowances. I would request the Government most humbly to substantially improve the recommendations of the Wage Board which are highly inadequate about DA, HRA and CCA and make it decent. The most important thing is that there should be a time-limit. Under section 12(ii) for hearing of the two sides, notices have to be issued to both the parties. But if the whole thing starts again, then, it will take a long time. So, a time-limit for disposal has to be fixed. I would suggest one month's time-limit be fixed for it so that part-II of the notification is made within a month.

Madam, there has been a lot of hue and cry from the employees' side about the Wage Board and alleged incapacity to pay. Madam, may I point out...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY): No "Madam".

SHRI KAPIL VERMA: I am sorry.

According to the Wage Board the average gross profit of the newspaper industry increased by 200 per cent in 7 years, that is, from 1980 to 1987 and the average gross profit as percentage of the capital invested grew from 14.8 per cent to 21.5 per cent during the period 1980—87. This is true for the entire newspaper industry. Even the Board has said in its report that while the managements were invited to give figures about the additional financial burden that would be caused to them because of the Wage Board recommendations, they gave wrong figures. This is the Wage Board's own findings. May I remind you about the Palekar Tribunal Award? The Palekar Tribunal had also said this that manage-

ments have given wrong figures to them. If I may point out to you how the Wage Board recommendations about the salary scales are so ridiculous... (*Interruptions*)...We are discussing a basic salary of a working journalist at the minimum—I am taking the minimum in the lowest categories—it is Rs. 1160 for the working journalist and Rs. 830 for a non-journalist. If you compare it with what an unskilled worker is getting in the other industries at the lowest rung of the ladder, you will be shocked. For example, the minimum salary in the banks of this category is Rs. 1183. In the coal industry, it is Rs. 1304. In Ports and Docks, it is Rs. 1490 and in cement industry, it is Rs. 1297. So, the working journalist, who is supposed to set the highest standards of morality and exhibit the best possible character and comment on the biggest possible events in the world, gets less than an unskilled workers in some of our industries. Even in the SAIL which has concluded an agreement recently, the unskilled worker there gets a minimum salary, a minimum basic wage of Rs. 1500 while in our profession, the non-journalist employee gets Rs. 830 and the journalist gets Rs. 1160. So, you can imagine their frustration because of the injustice meted out to journalists and therefore, I would appeal to the hon. Minister to pleas make it a decent wage. The most attractive part of this Wage Board report despite all its faults, weaknesses and infirmities, to my mind, is the clubbing provision which has been included for the first time. The clubbing provision is meant for those establishments which

12.00 Noon

[Shri Kapil Verma]

have opened a number of new establishments at various places. So, all these establishments will be clubbed together for the purposes of this Act and treated as one establishment. This provision has been included to prevent the fraudulent actions of the management in splitting the establishments into so many parts only to reduce the gross revenue so that the working journalist has not to be paid his dues according to the Wage Board scale. I warmly welcome this clubbing provision and I hope it will be implemented and as I said, the crux of the matter just now is that the recommendations are notified quickly, that they are modified substantially, particularly the CCA, the DA and the HRA which are absurd and not decent at all. I will also request the Minister to make some provision for medical benefits for journalists. In fact, this is the only industry where there is no provision of medical benefits. Some such steps must be taken immediately. I request the Minister to act immediately on the subject and quickly notify the report because ten years have passed by and the journalists have not got even a single wage revision while other industries have got two to three revisions.

In the end, I would request the Minister to also recall the assurance of the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister two years ago and the Minister's own assurance that quickly a decision will be taken on pension scheme also for working journalists. In fact, at our insistence, a working group was appointed for formulating pension to journalists. It has submitted its report. Probably there are two or three alternatives suggested by it. We did expect that the pension bill would also be put before this House during this Session. But since the time is very limited and probably the Government has not taken a final decision on it, I would request the hon. Minister to introduce the pension bill during the next session which is coming very soon. The Prime Minister's pledge, his promise, to put this Bill during this Session has been redeemed. I hope within a few days the recommendations will also be notified in a substantially improved form so that justice is done to journalists and a decent wage is given to them because you must remember that there should be freedom of press. We all talk of freedom of press. But unless we give economic freedom to journalists, unless we give a very decent wage to newspaper staff of all sides, unless freedom of press is really practised, the country's democracy will not be safe. Thank you very much.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN (West Bengal): Sir, I rise to support the Bill. The Bachawat Award was submitted on the 30th of May. They made recommendations for legislative support to certain parts of the recommendations and in response to that the Government has come up with this Bill and so I support it. Sir, after about ten years, the wages and allowances of newspaper employees and working journalists are going to be revised according to the award of the wage board. The last revision was by Palekar Award. Since then no revision has taken place. So this revision is overdue. Although newspaper employers' organisations are opposing the implementation of the Bachawat Award because they say that it will put a heavy burden on them, their plea is not maintainable. I will come to that later on. What I want to say is, it is true that big newspaper employers want to consume their profits by dividing the employees of small companies. Thereby they show that they earn less profit and they are not in a position to implement the award. This has to be checked by this Bill. So this Bill is worth supporting.

There is another point. While supporting this Bill, I would like to say something about the demands of journalists and newspaper employees about certain modifications of the Bachawat Award. The National Co-

ordination Committee of Newspapers and News Agencies Organisation has submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister listing their points on which they want to modify the Award so that it really benefits the newspaper employees and journalists. One point is, and the Government should agree to it, that this Award should be implemented from 1st June, 1986 because on that day the interim relief by the Board was given and from that day only it should be implemented so that real benefits go to the employees and journalists. Then, the memorandum has also demanded that the new pay-scales as suggested by the Board should be linked to the price index of 600 and not to the CPI of 752 as recommended by the Board. If it is linked to the CPI they will be the loser. So they demanded that it should be linked to 600. This is a genuine demand and the Government should consider it and accordingly take a decision. Not only that. The organisation of the newspaper employees and journalists has also demanded a revision of the house rent allowance from that recommended by Bachawat Award. What Bachawat Award has recommended is not sufficient and therefore the newspaper employees have suggested that it should be 15 per cent for all categories in all classes of newspapers and it should be 20, 15 and 12.5 per cent respectively in different categories of cities for news agency employees. This is a valid suggestion and I feel that the Government should agree to it.

Then there are certain other suggestions about pay-scales, proof-readers, sub-editors, etc. I am not going into the details. But I feel that the memorandum submitted by the employees and journalists organisations to the Prime Minister should be sympathetically looked into and accordingly if certain modifications have to be made, they should be made; otherwise, the benefits which should accrue to the employees and journalists will not accrue. Therefore, the Government should make suitable modifications.

Now I would like to say that the newspaper employers' organisations are opposing implementation of this Award. They say this will put a heavy burden on them. They are taking the plea that the newsprint price has gone up, has abnormally gone up, which has already put a heavy financial burden on the newspaper organisations and therefore it is not possible for them to implement this Award. They argue that if they implement it, it will put a severe financial burden on them and ultimately they may have to stop the newspaper publication itself. This plea of the newspaper organisations is not tenable. One thing I want to say. Unfortunately the Government has been unable to check the rising price of newsprint. This has put particularly the small, non-commercial, newspapers in great difficulty. It has put other newspapers also in great difficulty but the small-sized newspapers have been put to a greater hardship. So the Government should see to it that the rise in the newsprint should be checked and brought down and newsprint should be made available to the newspaper organisations freely and in abundance so that the scarcity which we are experiencing in the market is not there. This situation should be remedied immediately; otherwise, the entire book industry will suffer and the studies of students in schools and colleges will suffer seriously, the publication houses all over the country will suffer. Therefore, the rising price of newsprint should be checked immediately and the Government should take suitable remedial action. With these words I support the Bill again and I again recommend to the Government that the Government should favourably consider the memorandum submitted by the journalists and employees' organisations to the Prime Minister, and see that the recommendations are suitably modified.

श्री वीर भद्र प्रताप सिंह (उत्तर प्रदेश) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं अपने

[श्री वीर भद्र प्रताप सिंह]

को इस संशोधन विधेयक के समर्थन से संबद्ध करता हूं। मुझे अत्यंत प्रसन्नता है कि बचावत अवार्ड के सुझावों को सरकार ने संशोधन के रूप में सदन के समक्ष प्रस्तुत किया है।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, इस देश का दुर्भाग्य है कि इस देश के पत्र पूंजीपतियों के हाथ में हैं जिसको आप कहते हैं कि स्वतंत्र पत्र। जो सरकारी मीडिया है उसको परतंत्र कहा जाता है और जो बड़े-बड़े पूंजी-पतियों के हाथ मे हैं, उसको कहते हैं स्वतंत्र पत्र। दुर्भाग्य है कि इन पूंजीपतियों के अतिरिक्त जो पत्र शुरू किए गए, इन मालिकों ने भी पूंजी-पति का रूप धारण किया और पत्रकारों को शोषण प्रक्रिया निरंतर, लगातार चलती रही और बढ़ती रही। मैं मंत्री महोदय का ध्यान आकर्षित करते हुए यह कहना चाहता हूं कि उनका संशोधन विधेयक वर्किंग जरनलिस्ट्स और न्यूजपेपर्स इम्पलाइज तक ही सीमित है और यह बहुत आवश्यक भी है। मैं उत्तर प्रदेश का उदाहरण देना चाहता हूं। वहां पर कुछ पत्र ऐसे हैं जिनका एक जिले के बाद दूसरे जिले से नया एडीशन शुरू हो जाता है। अगर कोई पत्र कानपुर से निकलता है तो एक जिले को छोड़कर फिर लखनऊ से उसका एडीशन निकल जाता है। इधर उसका एक दफ्तर इलाहाबाद में है तो एक जिले को छोड़कर दूसरा दफ्तर बनारस में है और फिर गोरखपुर में है। यह कौनसा तरीका है। ये राष्ट्रीय पत्र हैं उनका स्वरूप स्थानीय पत्रों से भी छोटा होता जा रहा है। जो रीजनल पेपर्स हैं, उनसे छोटे हैं। लेकिन हरेक जिले में दफ्तर खोल कर नया एडीशन निकालने की प्रक्रिया उत्तर प्रदेश में शुरू हुई, उससे वर्किंग जरनलिस्ट्स को बहुत हानि पहुंची है। इसलिए मैं मंत्री महोदय को धन्यवाद देता हूं कि इस तरह के खतरों से वर्किंग जरनलिस्ट्स को बचाने के लिए जो विधेयक ला रहे हैं उससे हमारे चतुर्थ यानी फोर्थ स्टेट को बल मिलेगा। हमारे प्रजातंत्र को बल मिलेगा और हमारे जैसी मानसिकता के लोगों को बल मिलेगा। मगर मंत्री महोदय से यह भी विनम्रतापूर्वक मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि यह जो कानून वर्किंग जरनलिस्ट की सेवाओं में सुधार के लिए बना रहे हैं, सम्पूर्ण पत्रकारों के लिए इस तरह का विधेयक आप कब लाने का विचार कर रहे हैं? यह सही है कि बड़े शहरों में और राज्यों की राजधानियों में बड़े पत्रकार बसते हैं जिनका शोषण होता है, उन्हें शोषण से मुक्त होना चाहिए; मगर पत्रकारिता की जो ईंट है वह कस्बों और गांव-गांव में पहुंच रही है, उनको सेवा की जो सुविधायें हैं, उनको जिन हालात में काम करना पड़ता है, उनके लिए आप चिन्तित कब शुरू करेंगे? मैं नहीं जानता कि बचावत एवार्ड में उनके बारे में कहा गया है या नहीं, परन्तु जो आधारशिला है देश में पत्रकारिता की, वह जिले में और जिले से भी नीचे जो कस्बे और मुफस्सिल गांव हैं उनमें पत्रकार बस रहे हैं, उनके बारे में आप क्या महसूस कर रहे हैं? उनके ऊपर कितना बड़ा संकट होता है? अगर किसी स्थानीय अधिकारी के खिलाफ कोई समाचार प्रेषण कर दिया जाय तो उनको किसी भी मुकदमें में फंसाया जा सकता है और आप जानते हैं कि मालिक उनको क्या देते हैं? जिन पूंजीपतियों को बड़े पत्रकारों का शोषण करने में कोई संकोच नहीं होता है, जो पूंजीपति बड़े पत्रकारों को सेवा शर्तों को लागू न हो, इसके लिए अलग-अलग जगहों से अखबार निकाल कर उनका शोषण करते हैं वे पूंजीपति उन छोटे पत्रकारों जो ग्रामीण अंचलों के पत्रकार है, गांवों में सेवा करते हैं, जो किसी भी संकट का सामना करने के लिए खुले हैं, उनको कब हथकड़ी लग जाय, उनको कब जेल भेज दिया जाय, उनको कब गलत मुकदमें में फंसा दिया जायेगा, यह संकट उनके सामने सदैव बना रहता है। वे 15–20 या 30–40 या 50 रुपये पाते होंगे, मैं चाहता हूं कि आप उनका चिन्तन अगर चतुर्थ स्टेट की सेवा करना चाहते हैं तो मैं मंत्री महोदय से और सरकार से

से विनम्र निवेदन करना चाहूंगा कि बड़े पत्रकारों के अतिरिक्त भारत के सुदूर कोनों में फैले हुए, अंचलों में फैले हुए शोषण के पात्र सम्पूर्ण पत्रकारों के संबंध में चिन्तन प्रारम्भ करें। मेरा एक सवाल आपसे और है। मैं यह काम कर चुका हूं। मेरे ऊपर उसके फलस्वरूप लाठियां भी पड़ी हैं और जेल भी गया हूं। मैं वकील भी हूं, इसलिए मेरे में थोड़ी हिम्मत थी। मगर आप जानते है कि उनका कितना शोषण होता है। जो हमारा नेशनल प्रेस है जिसको ताज महल कहते हैं जो अब गांवों में बन रहा है उसके लिए आपका चिन्तन अवश्य शीघ्र प्रारम्भ होना चाहिए। बचावत एवार्ड में, मैंने पढ़ा नहीं है, मैं आशा करता हूं कि उसमें जरूर इसको कल्पना होगी। यदि आपने सम्पूर्ण पत्रकारों की समस्याओं के समाधान के लिए शीघ्र कदम नहीं उठाये तो मैं याद दिलाना चाहता हूं कि यह फोर्थ स्टट मजबूत नहीं हो सकेगी क्योंकि जो ईंट है वह सुदूर अंचलों में, गांवों में, कस्बों में फैल गई है और ये देश के हर प्रश्न के लिए लड़ रहे हैं। मैं समझता हूं कि इधर सरकार का ध्यान अवश्य आकर्षित होगा।

इन शब्दो के साथ मैं इस विधेयक का समर्थन करता हूं।

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI (Andhra Pradesh): The Bachawat Commission was appointed during 1985 and it submitted its report by the 30th May, 1989. We expected a lot from the Government after receiving its Award. We expected that the Government would bring out a comprehensive Bill for the welfare of journalists. But to our dismay it is only a piecemeal arrangement. I feel that the Government is not serious to incorporate all the recommendations of the Bachawat Award that was submitted as far back as in May 1989. So I would like to know from the Government, what is the thinking of the Government on the entire comprehensive recommendations of the Bachawat Award? Are they accepting these recommendations in toto? Or are they amending the recommendations? Or is the Government going to come up once again with another amendment for the implementation of the Bachawat Award? Or is the Government going to appoint another Commission, like the Bachawat Commission to amend those recommendations? I would like to know this from the hon. Minister.

The Bachawat Committee recommended several things. It suggested that several Acts may be amended. But only a few of them figure in the present Bill. So what is the follow-up action of the Government to implement the recommendations of the Bachawat Commission. What are they going to do about it? Mr. Bachawat pointed out that there is health hazard and risk to life as far as journalists are concerned, because they go very late in the night to sleep and they are compelled to go from one place to another, they are accustomed to eat whatever is available and at times they go to bed without taking anything for want of time. So the Bachawat Commission suggested appointment of an expert committee to go into the occupational and health hazards and risk to life for journalists. Nothing has been mentioned about it. He also mentioned about the provision for medical insurance, etc. for journalists. But nothing is mentioned in it. I am not quoting about the USA or the U.K. or any other advanced country. But these provisions are there right under your notice, in Pakistan. We may not compete with USA or U.K. or other such countries. But at least we can have similar provisions for the welfare of journalists which are existing in a neighbouring country, Pakistan. So I think that we should not lag behind Pakistan.

Another aspect that I would like to bring to your notice is about the

[Dr. Yelamanchili Sivaji]

newspaper price. Our colleague Mr. Sukomal Sen mentioned about it. The price of newspaper print is very high in this country as compared to any other country in the world. The Government day in and day out is going to enhance the newsprint paper price. It is being imported through the STC. And the STC is making profit out of the sale of newsprint paper. They are selling it at an exorbitant rate.

SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL (Gujarat): No, no, it is not correct.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: The Government is not allowing the newspaper industry to switch over to produce their own newsprint. They are not allowing any private industry to produce newsprint paper. It is not only the newspaper industry but also, as my friend Mr. Sukomal Sen pointed, the school-going children and college going people are suffering for want of writing material. So it is desirable to allow the newspaper industry and the private industry to produce more and more newspaper paper in this country. There are several newspapers in this country. Small newspapers are there, Medium newspapers are there, Regional newspapers are there. Newspapers published in regional languages deserve all encouragement from the Government. They deserve advertisements. They deserve some subsidy and other things. But precious little has been done by the Government to encourage the regional newspapers in regional languages. Likewise, the Telugu newspapers developed a lot in Andhra Pradesh. The Telugu newspapers are published in several editions from Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Tirupathi and several other places. These newspapers are *Eenadu, Andhra Patrika, Andhra Jyota, Andhra Prabha* and others. At the same time, they are competing with all the existing newspapers throughout the country. But preicous little has been done for the welfare of the Telugu newspaper industry in Andhra Pradesh. So, what I would like to suggest to the Government is that they should earmark certain quota of newsprint at subsidised rate for those newspapers that are published in regional languages. The regional language newspapers go right to the people. They are read by the village farmers or agricultural labourers or *rickshaw wala* or *tongawala*. They don't go in for an English newspaper. So, to raise literacy in the country and to encourage the reading habit among the rural people as well as among the semi-literates and semi-urbanites, it is desirable that the regional newspapers are encouraged.

Finally, I would like to mention to this august House, through you, that there is a credibility gap in the Government. The same Government was brought to introduce the Defamation Bill and they withdrew it. The same Government had resorted to censorship during 1975. Nowhere was the censorship imposed in the democratic world. Censorship was imposed in this country and it continued for 19 months. But for the coming in power of the Janata Party, this censorship could not have been averted in this country. What I feel is that the Government is suffering from some credibility gap. I think they are not serious in implementing the Bachawat Award for the welfare of the journalist community. So, I advise the Government to be honest, serious and liberal towards the journalists community. Journalists do not necessarily mean only those working in the newspaper industry. Those who are working in the newsagencies also come under the category of journalists. Nothing has been mentioned in the Bill about those who are working in the news agencies.

SHRI BINDESHWARI DUBEY: We are thinking about the newsagencies seriously.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: But your seriousness should be implemented. It should come into

action. I am glad that the Minister said that he is serious. But his seriousness should be implemented. It should be executed. I hope and I urge upon the Minister and upon the Prime Minister to see that all the recommendations that are incorporated in the Bachawat Award are implemented at an early date. I hope that it is not an election gimmick and an election promise without any seriousness at all. I hope that these recommendations will be implemented. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA (Himachal Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Working Journalists and other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions (Amendment) Bill, 1989 and congratulate the Government and the Labour Minister for bringing forward this Bill in the current session. I was quite surprised when the previous speaker, speaking on this subject, tried to make certain unwarranted and unjustified accusations against the Government and also attempted, though in vain, to politicise this subject. I was under the impression that all of us would be together in passing this Bill and would be equally keen to take up this subject today. But that was not to be because in the morning the Members on the other side who talk more about the freedom of the press and who pose as crusaders of press freedom were attempting to delay the passage of this particular Bill by raising other issues.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY): No, no. My impression is...

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Sir, it is for the other side to reply. And you are at present presiding over.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY): Everybody wanted to support it.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: We are interested in passing this Bill.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Sir, I am equally surprised by this attitude of the Opposition that they are politicising it to such an extent that they do not want to give the credit which is due to the Government and to the Prime Minister who has taken a personal interest in ensuring that the Bachawat recommendations... (*Interruptions*) I think you will have time to speak. Please do not interrupt...

SHRI M. A. BABY (Kerala): Will you bring forward that Defamation Bill also? Please explain that also.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY): Mr. Anand Sharma, you need not enter into a discussion with him.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: I am deliberately pointing out to the hon. Member who is a very dear friend of mine...

SHRI M. A. BABY: Will you be bringing that also?

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: I would like to inform my dear friend, Mr. Baby that there are certain procedures which have to be followed while speaking in the House, and constant interruptions and heckling is not the sign of a good Parliamentarian... (*Interruption*) I will answer. Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, this clearly shows—and even a few interruptions which have been made—that here we have an Opposition which adopts double standards, which is not prepared to concede even what is due to the Government, which is not prepared to acknowledge the good deed. As I was saying earlier, Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi deserves to be complimented for taking personal interest in ensuring that this Bill is taken up in both the Houses during the current session, and after that the Government can take action on the Bachawat recommendations. We all have our own opinion and views on the Bachawat recommendations. I have my own views which may be differ-

[Shri Anand Sharma]

ent from many of my colleagues and I will come to that later. But what is most important is that at least the way has been paved for the final action by the Government.

Sir, India has a shining record of press freedom. We are one of the freest press in the world. And I am quite surprised when my Marxist friends make sarcastic comments because as far as their ideology is concerned, their record is very poor, and I do not want to comment further on that. But in this country ever since our independence, Indian press has enjoyed freedom, and even if we compare with the other democracies, the Fourth Estate in this country is freer, and it is unfettered. Sir, a reference has been made to the Information Bill. When it was brought forward, there were certain tendencies which have been highlighted. But it is the Government which responded to the pleas, both of the journalists and the press people, and withdrew it. It is the Congress Government which gets the credit in ensuring a free press in India...

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO (Andhra Pradesh): It was the Congress which suppressed...

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: ...in ensuring that this freedom of the press is not undermined...

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO: ...the press during the emergency.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: The aberrations are not that important. What is more important is that you have a free press today. But when we talk of freedom, Sir, we must remember... (*Interruptions*) Such an old man interrupting and heckling is not a good sign. I will answer.

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO: Being an young man, you must be progressive.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: I am very progressive. I do not require a certificate from you. ... (व्यवधान) मैं थोड़ी ही कर रहा हूं झगड़ा, झगड़ा उधर से कर रहे हैं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री बी० सत्यनारायण रेड्डी) : आनन्द शर्मा जी, आप बहस में उतरने के बजाये..

श्री आनन्द शर्मा: आप उनको समझाइये, मैं बहस थोड़े ही कर रहा हूं। मैं तो बोलने के लिए खड़ा हुआ हूं, कोई बोलेगा तो उसका जवाब दूंगा।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री बी० सत्यनारायण रेड्डी) : आप बोलिए फिर, बहस में पड़ जायेंगे तो.. (व्यवधान)

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I was trying to say that the credit certainly belongs to the Government and the credit of bringing forward this Bill also belongs to this Government. It is not a small achievement that we in India have a press which can proudly claim itself to be free. But when we talk of the freedom of the fourth estate we must realise that the fourth estate like the other three has equal responsibility in preserving and strnegthening the democratic polity, in nurturing those value which will ensure the overall creation of a healthy environment for progress and development, an environment which will ensure that the forces which are detrimental to the concept of national unity and the forces which in any way foment trouble in the country or try to weaken the fabric of Indian democracy are not encouraged. For that objective and rational approach is very important I am worried about the increasing tendency in certain sections of the press to sensationalise the subjective approach. The tendency towards yellow journalism is something which we have to guard against. When we discuss the freedom of the press, we have to

discuss it in a really objective manner. I stand for the freedom of the press. But let me also remind my friends that there are others also who talk of the freedom of the press, who try to be crusaders in this country, moral crusaders. I am referring to the newspaper and the newspaper baron, Mr. Goenka, and that newspaper management has proved to be the most oppressive, which has the worst record as far as newspaper employees are concerned. Whenever the question of giving an increase to the employees of the Indian Express group of newspapers has arisen, what have they done? They have always used musclemen and outsiders to bully the working journalists and bully these people and certainly it does not lie in the mouth of these people.....

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI (Karnataka): You speak on the Bachawat award.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Well, we all know the record, Mr. Jethmalani. We know your leanings also.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: It has become an obsession with you.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: You have become obsessed. I am not obsessed. I am setting the record straight because unwanted accusations have been questioned and we have to make and the Government's sincerity has been questioned and we have to make it clear that though it is the Government which is committed to the freedom of the press, to the freedom of the individual journalists, and the freedom of the papers; the freedom of the press must not be linked with the actions of the corporate bodies controlling the newspapers. These are two different issues altogether and an attempt has been made of late to club the two together, to equate the freedom of an individual or industrialist with the freedom of the press. Kapil Vermaji has quoted certain statistics and I would not like to repeat all that But I entirely agree with him that it is unfortunate that a journalist should be paid less than an unskilled worker. Unskilled workers in organisations like the Steel Authority of India or Coal India and various other organisations have been getting more than what the journalists have been getting. Even in regard to these latest recommendations of the Bachawat Commission, I would like to appeal to the Government that the demand of the working journalists to increase substantially the HRA, to make a provision for the medical allowance, and also a substantial increase in the dearness allowance and the city compensatory allowance, these are very justified demands. These are the demands which I support and I appeal to the Government and the Minister to consider these demands made by the coordination committee of the working journalists because not giving them what they have asked for here would not amount to doing justice. For a long time there has not been any revision as far as the pay scales of the jouranlists are concerned.

SHRI KAPIL VERMA: Ten years.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: They have been waiting, they have been demanding and they have been agitating also. Three years ago an interim relief was given. I feel that the demand of the working journalists that the recommendations should be made operative from the same year when the interim relief was given is absolutely justified and I do hope that the Government, which has taken the necessary step to bring forward this Bill, will also consider these demand favourably and ensure that the Indian journalists are free in the truest sense and working conditions are created where they feel happy to work.

Sir, I do not have much to say, but I do compliment the Government on one count, that is, for clubbing the various establishments owned by a newspaper. What has been happening in the past was that the owners have been showing lesser profits, distributing the profits to other establishments owned by the same firm and

[Shri Anand Sharma]

denying the journalists and the newspaper employees their due. So, this clubbing is a very laudable feature of the Bill.

With these words, Sir, I support the Bill, compliment the Government, and again appeal to the Minister to consider the remaining demands. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY): Shri Pramod Mahajan.

RE. MOTION ON SITUATION IN SRI LANKA

SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Rajasthan): Sir, before my colleague, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, starts, I would like to seek a clarification, because the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs is here. Now that we know that the Panchayati Raj Bill is not going to be voted today there is another very important business listed, which is a discussion on a statement to be made by the Minister of External Affairs on Sri Lanka. We do want to know at what time the Minister is going to make the statement so that we can regulate the rest of our business.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. M. JACOB): That is... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: I want to know whether there is going to be a debate subsequent to it and how much time is going to be allotted for it.

SHRI M. M. JACOB: Sir, it is not our practice to allot time for any statement made by the Minister. It is only clarifications that are followed after a statement is made.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Let us know the time at which...

SHRI M. M. JACOB: And the rule is that when a Minister wants to make a statement he writes to the Chairman two hours before making a statement. So far, I don't think anything has been received in the Secretariat. I will find out.

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA (Uttar Pradesh): It is not a statement, it is a Government Motion.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: It is not listed here as a statement by the Minister. It is listed as a Motion. The honourable Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, I am sure, knows the distinction between a statement and a Motion. What is listed here is a Motion. We want to know when this Motion is going to be taken up and how much time you are allotting for it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY): He has to inform two hours in advance.

SHRI M. M. JACOB: It has not come so far.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Mr. Vice-Chairman, there are two different points altogether. The point is that the List of Business for today lists a Motion standing in the name of the Minister for External Affairs. The Government is coming forward with a Motion. The honourable Minister for Parliamentary Affairs says he is going to make a statement. These are two totally different things. If already it is listed in the List of Business that it is going to be a Motion, we want to know at what time it is going to be taken up and how much time is allotted for it.

SHRI M. M. JACOB: I mentioned it.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Do me the courtesy of letting me finish.

SHRI M. M. JACOB: Last time I mentioned it.